

Where Can I Find Wisdom?

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Job chapter 28, I am going to ask you to stand out of reverence for the Word of God. Job chapter 28, verse 1.

Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place for gold that they refine. Iron is taken out of the earth, and copper is smelted from the ore.

Man puts an end to darkness and searches out to the farthest limit, the ore and gloom and deep darkness. He opens shafts in a valley away from where anyone lives.

They are forgotten by travelers. They hang in the air far away from mankind. They swing to and fro. As for the earth, out of it comes bread, but underneath it is turned up as by fire.

[1 : 11] Its stones are the place of sapphires, and it has the dust of gold. That path no bird of prey knows, and the falcon's eye has not seen it.

The proud's beef have not trodden it, and the lion has not passed over it. Man puts his hand to the flinty rock and overturns mountains by the roots.

He cuts out channels in the rocks, and his eye sees every precious thing. He damns up the streams so that they do not trickle, and the thing that is hidden he brings out to the light.

But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Verse 13, man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living.

The deep says, it is not in me, and the sea says, it is not in me. It cannot be bought for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price. It cannot be valued in the gold of ophir and precious onyx or sapphire.

[2 : 17] Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral and of crystal. The price of wisdom is above pearls.

The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. From where then does wisdom come? And where is the place of understanding?

It is hidden from the eyes of all living, concealed from the birds of the air. Abaddon and death say, we have heard rumor of it with our ears.

God understands the way to it, and he knows its place. For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens. When he gave to the wind its weight and apportioned the waters by measure, when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then he saw it and declared it.

He established it and searched it out, and he said to man, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.

[3 : 29] This is the word of the Lord. Please be seated. Each year, my eldest son and I, my oldest son, like to backpack a section of the Appalachian Trail.

Several years ago, we did a beautiful section through Roan Mountain in Virginia. Commended to everybody. On the second night, after a long day of hiking and many feet of elevation gain, we stumbled into a flat, quiet campsite.

We got some fresh water and set up camp. Gradually, a few through-hikers came into our camp.

Now, through-hikers is a nickname for those who set out in Georgia in the spring and try to make it to Maine, 2,200 miles before winter hits.

After eating, we made a fire, and gradually, all the through-hikers moseyed up to our fire to feel its warmth and to talk.

We introduced ourselves. After spending weeks hiking mainly alone, it was obvious these moments of connection were valuable to these through-hikers as they were to us.

[4 : 44] After a while of sitting around, talking around the fire, I said, Where are you going? Now, I knew they were trying to get to Maine. I think it's one in four makes it to Maine.

But I asked, Why are you out here? What are you looking for? Two of the folks were a father and son. The son had just gotten out of rehab, and the father had just retired.

They were hiking together. I remember their faces. Hiking together in hopes of finding and starting a new life. Of sobriety and freedom. Another was a veteran looking for peace.

Ripped up. Body was broken down in so many ways. And looking for peace after all he'd seen and heard. Perhaps most grippingly, the fourth was a lady whose brother died at 44 years old of a one-time use of fentanyl, leaving behind a wife and kids.

And now she said, when we saw her on the trail, she said, I'm 44, and I'm trying to find what I lost when I lost him. As I sat around the fire, looking into these people's eyes, I had the thought that we're all looking for something.

[6 : 07] We may not be on the AT, but everybody's going somewhere. Everybody's looking for something. We may be running from a childhood filled with a hall of horrors, of abuse and neglect and disgust, and you feel like you're always trying to outpace the horror that affected you at the beginning.

We may be searching for the affection of a father because our father never gave it, or the attention of our mom because a mom failed to give it. We may be hunting for a place to fit in, so much of our culture, a place to belong, to not be alone anymore.

We may be looking for a reason to live, a reason to stop cutting, a reason to stop starving ourselves, a reason to stop pouring drugs into the body. Whatever it is, we're searching for answers.

We all are on this quest for meaning and purpose and peace, and Job 28 emerges right after the midst of all these chapters on this conversation to alert us that Job and his friends are searching for answers as well.

Job 28 is a beautiful hymn about wisdom, and you captured some of that. It's a break in the action for 23 chapters. We've heard this dialogue between Job and Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, 23 chapters of dialogue and wrestling with these things, and after this, there'll be three long speeches that conclude the book.

[7 : 37] We'll hear from Job, his last stand. We'll hear from Elihu, and then we'll hear from the Lord himself. Unlike the intense dialogue of the previous chapters, Job 28 is calm, collected, reflected, and reflective.

If Job 28 were read out loud, it would be read with almost a whisper. But it's more than a break in the action. It's vital to the overall argument of the book. It is, in my opinion, not the words of Job, but the words of the narrator who began the book.

If you remember, he told us about what was going on in heaven when this temptation was brought about on Job's life. And then we see this dialogue for 23 chapters, and I believe this is the narrator interrupting, kind of concluding that section before we begin another.

We know in chapter 27, Job's words are introduced. These are the words of Job. So too in 29, they're introduced as well. I think there's no introduction in 28 because these are the words of the narrator.

And so the narrator's alerting us that Job and his friends have been searching for wisdom. Why has all this happened to Job? What has gone on? Job's friends know why.

[8 : 53] They say, you reap what you sow, but that's not the whole story. The narrator, the all-knowing narrator is alerting us that wisdom is never, and it's never been, a formula.

Wisdom is not a book of manners or a book of rules. Wisdom is what only God can give. And in a word, where we're going is, even in the darkest night, the wise life is still found in fearing God and obeying his commands.

Even in the darkest night, the wise life is still found in fearing God and obeying his commands. The first point, which captures the first 12 verses, is no one can find wisdom by searching.

No one can find wisdom by searching. These verses break up very naturally with that wisdom refrain in verse 12. You see that there and again in verse 20 and then it concludes when it talks about wisdom in verse 28 and verses 1 to 12 detail incredible mining and civilization-making

achievements of mankind.

Since the beginning of time, man has searched out precious jewels and gems and metals. They've drilled down in the earth, cut canals through the earth to gather silver and gold to be refined, iron and copper to be melted down to make weapons of warfare.

[10:19] It's an incredible achievement. Look down at verse 3. He says, man puts an end to darkness, searches out to the farthest limit the ore and gloom in deep darkness.

He opens shafts in the valley far away from where anyone lives. Man puts an end to darkness. What's the idea? These precious gems and metals are buried deep into the earth, buried in the darkness, but man searches them down, opens shafts of light to find these metals.

Man digs underneath the mountains. Look in verse 9. He says, man puts his hand into the flinty rock and overturns mountains by its roots. How do you find that air pod that fell out of your ear and rolled up underneath the couch?

You turn it up, right? Well, that's what man does to the mountains, digging and looking for these precious metals. He continues in verse 11.

Man dams up the springs so that they don't trickle wide so that everything at the bottom of the rivers might be seen.

[11:32] Everything hidden he bring to light. Mankind does what no creature has done. That's what's going on in verse 7 and 8. That path, the way into the darkness where these jewels and gems are hidden, that path, no bird of prey knows, no falcon's eye has seen it.

The proud beasts have not trodden it. The lion, the great lion has not passed it. It's striking because whereas the friends call man a worm and a maggot, they denigrate man.

Job 28 elevates man. Man is made in the image of God, creates dominion on the earth. It's a fabulous thing that man does. This work is exhausting and excruciating.

You see that in these verbs that come at us. Verse 3, he searches out to the farthest limits. Verse 4, he opens shafts. Look at the end of verse 4.

It's almost like a picture into a mind right now. They hang in the air far away from mankind, swinging to and fro, held by ropes, searching into the shafts.

[12:41] He says in verse 9, he puts his hand to the flinty rock, the hard rock he reaches into, overturns mountain, cuts channels, dams up springs.

Part of his difficulty is the loneliness. You see that in verse 4. He's away from where anyone goes. He's forgotten by travelers, far away from mankind.

Still today, the minds are the most, or some of the most, difficult, painful, most undesirable work. But why is he drawing attention to all this? Well, the poem is accenting the difficulty of the work in order to underline the length to which man will go to get what he treasures.

There's gold in them there hills and so we all went west for the gold. Man will sacrifice so much to get what he treasures. It's a picture of mankind.

Reading these achievements, we could add our voice to the many other achievements of mankind. The pyramids, the Roman aqueducts, the making of land in the west, the skyscraper, the Hoover Dam, the spread of language, the printing press, the internet, as Al Gore said.

[13:59] The development of travel, the automobile, and the ease of travel by car, the airplane, the ease of travel by air, what previous generations dreamed about. took decades, I mean, years of planning.

You can just hop in a plane and get there. One of the great achievements in our country is the Croton River aqueduct in New York City. I remember reading about this years ago. In the 1800s, the population in New York City began to grow rapidly, but sources of fresh water became a serious problem with a growing population surrounded by brackish water.

not safe to drink. Residents gathered from rainfall, but it wasn't enough. The population in New York kept growing and seemingly continued to keep growing.

They devised a plan for a massive engineering project bringing water from the Croton River 30 miles away, piping it into the city. So the river was dammed, aqueducts were built, tunnels dug, piping laid, reservoirs created.

Sounds simple, right? But it was a feat like that of the Roman aqueducts. Not only was building aqueducts, digging tunnels, creating reservoirs hard, but they encountered numerous problems.

[15:16] Since it was underground, they had to create numerous outlets where the pipe could be assessed and possibly diverted if the water was not good or polluted in some way.

They had to take the pipe underneath the swamp, the Hudson, or the Harlem River and under swamps. The maximum progress of this, and this is 1800, maximum progress was 21 feet a week. Took five years. 40 miles, 27 million bricks, hundreds of mules and horses, a great number of steam engines and 10,000 men.

But it got done. It might be tempting from our vantage point in modern man to say, what can the modern man not do? Is there anything modern man can't do?

And the narrator says, yes, the modern man can't find wisdom. There's an accent. If you notice, we go through these verses, there's an accent on place, a mine for silver, a place for gold.

[16:21] Out of the earth comes the ore, the farthest limit, the valley. Out of the earth comes bread, the place where sapphires are, the flinty rock. All these things are accenting the place where they found these precious jewels and minerals and things like that.

But there is no place where they can find for wisdom. Man can find his way into the darkness. He can bring what's hidden to light, but he cannot find wisdom.

You know, it's interesting when we talk about the achievements of mankind, we use the language of dominance, of control, of conquering. Man has conquered the night with the light bulb.

Man has conquered the sky with airplanes, the sea with ships, the body with medicine, and so it goes often with sinful man being made in the image of God and called to bring forth dominion for the glory of God.

So often turns into tales of conquer for the glory of man. So much of life is under our control.

[17:25] Transportation, we drive and fly. Disease, smallpox, measles, polio. Listen to a book right now on FDR and about his polio.

Imagining a world where polio could paralyze like it did him. Human life, you know, so much of life just kind of under our control. We decide when we're going to have kids.

Right? We'll take the pill. We'll decide when we're going to have kids. So much of our lifestyle, our daily life has been reduced down to a customizable life that we decide the reigning idol of our time may be control, but it's an illusion.

It's an illusion. We're just playing in the sandbox. The Lord's in control. You can't control your life.

Most importantly, you can't control wisdom. You can't conquer it. You must be conquered by it. You cannot even find it. Point two, no one can gain wisdom with wealth.

[18:38] No one can gain wisdom with wealth. No one can find wisdom by searching. No one can gain wisdom with wealth. Verses 13 through 20 detail the great wealth of mankind.

No one can find wisdom by searching or gain it with wealth. While the opening verses kind of gradually talk about seeking and finding all this treasure alerting us that no one will find wisdom by seeking it.

These verses come right out to say no one can gain wisdom with wealth. Look in verse 15. He says, it cannot be bought for silver or for gold and silver cannot be weighed, cannot be valued in the gold of ophir and precious onyx and sapphire.

Gold and glass cannot, you see all the negation, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold. No mention will even be made of coral and crystal. Price of wisdom is above pearls.

The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor can it be valued in pure gold. What's the author doing?

Well, these precious metals and gems were not just beautiful, behold, they were a source of wealth in ancient world and the most precious metals and gems are worthless when trying to buy wisdom.

[20:00] The narrator rattles off this list of metals and gems because they were the metals of the day, the gems of the day, gold and silver, the gold of ophir, onyx, sapphire, gold, glass, jewels, coral, crystal, pearls, topaz, pure gold.

How could it be measured? How much gold is needed to barter to get wisdom? How much silver can be weighed out? How much onyx and sapphire, gold and glass could reach its jowl?

How many jewels could be exchanged for wisdom? What about coral and crystal? What about all these things? What's going on? The accent is on the exchange and on the inability to make an exchange for wisdom.

Riches can't buy wisdom. You know, we believe in our world that money is power and so if you have money, you have security and calm.

You're free from disaster. You're insulated from so many of the things that take out other men and so if the reigning idol of our time is control, well then the greater the wealth, the greater the control.

[21 : 04] Buy your way out. You can have whatever you want. You can have whatever house you want, whatever car you want, whatever wife you want and you can get yourself out of anything you don't want but when it comes to wisdom, money is worthless.

There's a lot of rich idiots in the world. Really? When it comes to wisdom. I remember being fascinated as a kid with Howard Hughes.

Kind of odd role models when I was a little kid but he's one of the richest men in the United States. He did tons for aviation, movie production, real estate. Even now he does tons or I mean his wealth continues to do tons for medical research.

Teams of the best scientists and doctors researching for the future of medicine but he became a miserable hypochondriac and germaphobe.

He owned tons of things. He once ran I can't remember the name of his airline but he would pick up everything with Kleenex or paper towels for fear of catching something.

[22 : 17] He wore tissue boxes on his feet to protect them. He burned his clothes if he was around anyone who got sick after he was around them. Toward the end of his life he lived in darkened hotel rooms with aluminum foil over the windows because they were germ free.

He was rich and successful but he was an idiot. But he came to wisdom. What's striking though about these verses is it's not merely saying gold and silver cannot buy wisdom.

It's not merely saying the problem is there's not enough gold and silver in the world. He's saying the problem is man doesn't value wisdom. Like look back there in verse 13.

He says man does not know its worth and it is not found in the land of the living. The deep says it's not in me. The sea says it's not in me. No one knows the value of wisdom.

Notice the irony here. Man is doing wondrous achievements unfathomably great lengths and gives away almost everything to secure what he deems value.

[23 : 32] but it's not what's valuable. It's a metaphor of mankind sacrificing so much to gain what is not valuable in the end.

He misses wisdom. So the problem is not with money or wealth. The problem is deeper than money. The problem is in our hearts. Wisdom cannot be found by searching.

Wisdom cannot be bought with wealth. Most importantly wisdom cannot be valued without God.

Changing our hearts until we come to see the value.

I was struck by this a couple weeks ago. In the summertime. Scotty Scheffler. So those of you that don't follow the world of golf, Scotty Scheffler has dominated again this year.

He won six total tournaments. He's now won 19 times in his six year career including four majors. I think he's 30 years old yet. Two masters, one PGA, one Open.

[24 : 32] Earning just in golf alone \$99 million. He's a confessing Christian. Before the Open this year he was interviewed.

Asked, you know, he's the number one in the world. Every tournament he goes in he's a projected winner. Asking what he enjoys about his career. Now we have this for you. He says, I love the challenge.

I love being able to play this game for a living. I like the humility to say it's a real privilege to play a game for a living. It's one of the greatest joys of my life.

But does it fill the deepest wants and desires of my heart? Absolutely not. When I sit back at the end of the year and try to reflect on things like having that sense of accomplishment from winning the master's tournament.

Everybody wants to win the master's. From winning the PGA championship, I have a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation for it. But it's just hard to explain how it doesn't.

[25 : 35] It doesn't satisfy how I would describe it. It is an unsatisfying venture. 99 million dollars.

He says, it's an unsatisfying venture. That's the picture of man. That's the picture of Job and his friends. They're trying to find wisdom but it's a very unsatisfying venture.

They're not finding it. You remember Solomon. The Lord says, ask and I'll give you anything you want.

What's he say? I want wisdom. The Lord often makes the wise rich but he never makes wise those who only want riches.

Point three, wisdom is only found in fearing God. Wisdom is only found in fearing God. No one can find wisdom by searching.

[26 : 34] No one can gain wisdom with wealth. Only God gives wisdom. That's where this wisdom poem is going. Look down there in verse 21. It says, it is hidden.

So after the refrain again, from where does wisdom come? If it doesn't come from searching and digging in the earth and it doesn't come from the bounty that you got, the gold that you found in them hills, where does it come from?

The narrator says it's hidden from the eyes of all living, concealed from the birds of the air. Man may be able to bring an end to darkness and bring out the hidden treasures, but he'll never be able to find wisdom on his own because God has hidden it.

Hidden from the eyes of all living, concealed from the birds of the air that can fly high. The idea is wisdom is not put on the lowest shelf so that anybody that walks by can grab it.

The heavens declare the glory of God, but wisdom the Lord has concealed and hidden. Now he noticed, look down there with me again, he says it's hidden from the eyes of all living.

[27 : 49] Very important reference to the eye there. He's directing these words towards Job and his friends. The friends say they're teaching Job about what they've seen.

They've seen this world, they've seen that the righteous prosper and the wicked suffer. That's what they say, we've seen it with our eye. And he says that is not the way to wisdom.

You think you got it cornered, you think you know, but he says it's hidden. Wisdom is not that simple. So too, Job responds to what he's seen, he judges God according to what he's seen, because he sees the opposite.

He sees the righteous suffering and the wicked prospering. How could it be that the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper? But he's saying you cannot judge God, you're not going to find wisdom through your eyes.

Wisdom is concealed and hidden until it's revealed by God. Look at verse 23, he says God knows the way of it, God understands the way to it, he knows its place.

[28 : 59] We've been talking about place the whole time, where is the mind for wisdom? Well, God knows. God knows where wisdom is found in this perplexing world.

God knows how to live upright, how to live in the fear of God. Man searches as far as he can go. Look at verse 24, man searches as far as he can go, but the Lord looks to the end of the earth.

Man sees what is in the bottom of the rivers, he lays it out, but the Lord sees everything under the heavens. Accenting, the Lord is not based his study on a little test case.

The Lord sees and knows all things, and so he knows the way of wisdom. He continues, and the poet, the narrator, draws our attention to God's creative power, ruling over all things.

Look at verse 25, he gave to the wind its weight, a portion to the waters by measure, when he made a decree for the rain and a way for the lightning of the thunder.

[30 : 06] What's going on here? These are all the things that are impossible for us to control. We might dig in the earth and find a bit of gold and think we got all things under control, but the Lord knows the weight of the wind.

The Lord directs the hurricane. the Lord portions the water. He measures all these things. They're like in the palm of his hand, like Isaiah 40 says.

What's he saying? All the things we cannot possibly control, because we know the weatherman does not know anything about weather, seemingly. All these things we cannot possibly control, they're all in God's hand.

This theme he's going to drive through in verses chapters 38 through 39. And after creating all these things, he put forward wisdom.

Look at verse 27. It's like he is, the Lord is, the one who finds the thing of greatest value. He saw it. That's a reference to wisdom.

[31 : 15] He declared it. He established it. He searched it out. He saw it. He grabbed it. He took a hold of it. He examined it to see its worth.

He declared that it was that valuable thing. He prepared it. He established it like a jeweler finding a precious diamond. The Lord has sought out his diamond.

Wisdom. Searched it out. What is it then? Then what is wisdom? He says. And he said to man, behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, to turn away from evil, that is understanding.

It's the first time the Lord has spoken in the book. He said to man, it's not found with the eyes, it's found by the voice of God.

It's found by revelation. What's meant by the fear of the Lord? You know, Proverbs 1 tells us the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

[32 : 18] I think the meaning of the fear of the Lord is found in the relationship of those two lines. The relationship helps us understand. Despise is a strong negative word, not merely for refusing something or not liking something, but hating something.

It's disgust. This word despise, though, helps us understand what the fear of the Lord is. So the fear of the Lord is the opposite of hating something. It's wanting something.

It's needing something, longing for something. So the fear of the Lord is not what we think. It's not cringing dread or cowering fear. It's openness to the living God. It's surrendering your life to Him and trusting your life to His hands.

That's the fear of the Lord, a willingness to receive whatever He gives. It's the only right response to those made in the image of God.

God is the response of fear and wonder and awe that you would have a relationship with this wonderful being who rules over all things. But if you're anything like me, you're thinking, how can this be the answer for Job?

[33 : 28] I get it. It's in Proverbs 1. I get it that it's the end of Ecclesiastes, but Job needs an answer. Job deserves an answer. He lost his possessions.

He lost all the people he loved. He lost all vigor and vitality of life. He sits on the ash heap, scraping himself all day long. And the Lord says, fear the Lord.

But wasn't that what Job already did? Didn't it say he feared the Lord and turned away from evil? He's blameless and upright in every way three times in chapter 1?

You might be tempted to say the same thing. I want an answer. Lord, I want an answer.

I want an answer. I want to know why cancer is struck. I want to know why I was abused. I want to know why I was slandered and maligned. I want to know why suffering plucked me out, why everyone else just walked on by.

[34 : 32] I want to know why my spouse committed adultery. I want to know why my dad left and why my mom neglects me. I want to know why you left me to live this life. But this is the answer.

Now the smart guys tell me there's an important thing going on in the Hebrews here, in the Hebrew here, my Hebrew is very weak, that when wisdom is mentioned in verse 12 and in verse 20, there is a definite article.

So it's saying the wisdom, the wisdom. But in verse 28, when it says the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, there is no article.

Why? Because wisdom is not an answer, wisdom is the answer. Wisdom is not a formula, not a problem to be solved.

Wisdom is not a book of manners, not teaching us how to be polite, which knife and which fork to use when we're eating at a nice dinner. It's not a book of rules that you must check off to have a good life.

[35 : 40] Wisdom is a person. That's what's alerting us. And if we know from wisdom literature in Proverbs, wisdom is compared to a person, is compared to lady wisdom. Come and find her.

Listen to her as she calls out in the street. Go and find her. Later in Proverbs 8, it's compared to the closest companion of God. It's compared to this one who was with God in the beginning, who saw everything that was made.

Wisdom is compared to a person that is alongside of God and in fellowship with God. And indeed, as we learn in the New Testament, wisdom is the Lord Jesus Christ because in him was made everything that was made and there was not nothing made that was not made through him.

In him, he is the wisdom from God. He became for us wisdom from God. Colossians 2, in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And so, the fear of the Lord, if we understand from the New Testament, is trusting and following and leaning not on your own understanding but walking in fellowship with the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is the answer because it's placing your life into the hands of him who knows better than you. Why was Job mowed down?

[37 : 01] Why was his family mowed down? We'll never know. And the Lord never tells Job but he says, entrust yourself to me.

What are you searching for? What do you want? What do you want? The Lord is the answer. You know, occasionally you read a book or I read a book, I read books and some, though, shape my

thinking more than others.

John Piper says we're not changed by books, we're changed by paragraphs, even more than that, we're changed by sentences. One book that's really changed me is the book called *The Great Divorce* by C.S.

Lewis. It's kind of a wild book because it's a story about people going from hell to heaven in a bus. So it's obviously fictional.

But it captures the attitude of a man. One of the scenes, there's several different scenes in there. one is a scene of a man who keeps asking why. Why, why, why, why, why?

[38 : 21] And he comes to heaven, he comes to the great angel. Essentially the angel says to him, I can let you into heaven, but you have to let go of your questions.

He says, I'll bring you, and I quote, to the land, not of questions, but of answers, and you shall see the face of God.

It isn't what you've wanted, but you can't ask questions anymore. And the searcher, as he's called in the book, he says, we all must interpret those lines in our own way.

For me, there's no such thing as a final answer. The free wind of inquiry must always continue to blow through the mind. You can imagine somebody in education talking about it.

It's always got to be asking, always got to be searching. And yet there's a way of searching and learning that never arrives at the truth, and that's what Lewis is getting at. The white spirit says to him, listen, once you're a child, once you knew what inquiry was for, once you knew why you were asking questions, it was because it was because you wanted answers and were glad when you found him, but that child is, but become that child again, even now.

[39 : 40] He's saying the way to walk, the way to know the Lord is a way of walking in what you know and embracing what you know and what he's revealed.

You know, the searcher eventually turns it away. He goes back to hell. He turns away an entrance to heaven to go back to leading the discussion group. He's been held because he liked searching for answers so much.

Now, we may think we would never refuse heaven for more answers, but the point is there's a danger in always asking questions. That's what's going on in this book.

Always searching, always thinking, always wrestling, but never obeying. You know, in our culture, it's cool to seek, but not cool to find. It's hip to be open, but not decided.

It's popular to pursue community, but not to commit to it. We love to talk about many things, but never draw hard lines. Never color in sharpie.

[40 : 38] Before long, you become like one of those who are always learning and never arriving at the truth. So what's the way out? Fear God and keep his commandments. That's where it's going.

That's where the book is going. Even in the darkest night, the wise life is still found in fearing God and obeying his commandments. Where are you going? What are you looking for? What do you want?

Wisdom is not an answer. It's the answer. It's not a principle. It's a person, our Lord Jesus Christ, who we commune with by faith. We know better than Joe how the Lord delivers us through Jesus Christ.

He's wisdom from God, not merely an answer. He's wisdom from God because he delivers us from our greatest dilemma. He's our righteousness, our sanctification and our redemption, 1 Corinthians 1 said, and delivers us through his saving life and death.

Let us go to him. Father in heaven, we thank you for this morning, the opportunity to sit under these words. We pray that you would make us wise. Help us, we pray.

[41 : 46] We lean on you and not on our own understanding. In all our ways, acknowledge you, trust that you will make straight our path. We need you and we confess you.

We want to play it straight, God. We want to know you. We want to fear you and walk in your ways. Help us, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

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